

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

JUNE 4, 2014

Building an Express Lane to Health Reform Benefits

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (“Board”) has consistently declared it a priority to successfully implement the Affordable Care Act. The Board has also declared it a priority to reform the County bureaucracy to make it more responsive to its more than ten million residents. Recent federal and state agency guidance make it easier for the Board to accomplish these two goals.

CalFresh (formerly known as “Food Stamps”) is a federally funded nutritional program that provides low income individuals, children and families with benefits that can be used to purchase food. The average CalFresh benefit is approximately \$200 a month for a one-person household.

Studies by both the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Urban Institute find that, despite the differences in eligibility and income-counting rules, the vast majority of non-elderly, non-disabled individuals who receive CalFresh are also eligible for free Medicaid (called Medi-Cal in California). Thousands of CalFresh consumers, however, do not know to also apply for Medi-Cal or are discouraged from

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applying because of the complex and onerous Medi-Cal application process.

Now, recent federal and state law guidance enable Los Angeles County to efficiently identify and automatically enroll CalFresh consumers into Medi-Cal without requiring them to complete a separate and burdensome Medi-Cal application. This strategy, called Express Lane, also helps alleviate the costly administrative burdens placed on the County Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to otherwise process Medi-Cal applications. CalFresh consumers need only give their consent to apply for Medi-Cal.

DPSS estimates that Express Lane could help the County more easily enroll the more than 150,000 County residents who are currently receiving CalFresh benefits, but not yet enrolled in the Affordable Care Act's expanded Medi-Cal benefits.

Express Lane will help save County taxpayer dollars and will connect residents countywide to affordable health benefit coverage.

**I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** direct the Director of the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS) to fully implement the Express Lane streamlined eligibility process described in State Department of Health Care Services All-County Letter #14-06 (<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/medical/eligibility/Documents/ACWDL2014/14-06.pdf>) and Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services Guidance (<http://www.medicaid.gov/federal-policy-guidance/downloads/sho-13-003.pdf>) so that Los Angeles County residents can more

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easily obtain the benefits of the Affordable Care Act. I further direct the Director of DPSS to report back in writing in sixty days and monthly thereafter, on progress, including any outreach, computer programming and workload adjustment efforts it has made to comply with this motion as well as the number of individuals successfully enrolled through the Express Lane process.

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(YV/BR)